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**ARSONIST PLEADS GUILTY IN CASE INVOLVING DEATH OF A CHILD**

SACRAMENTO - United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that Quoc Phu Pham, 33, has pled guilty to participating in the January 7, 1997 firebombing of a residence located at 6100 Merry Lane, Carmichael, California. The home was occupied by two brothers, a sister and the sister's three children. Nine year old Hien Tran died in the fire and her uncle, Duc Tran, suffered third degree burns over more than 30% of his body, and has had to undergo extensive reconstructive surgery. Hien Tran's other uncle, Tri Tran, was also injured when he attempted to rescue the little girl from her burning bedroom.

According to his signed plea agreement, Pham acknowledged that an individual named Tanh Huu Lam hired a person named Trung Thanh Pham to kill Tri Tran. Trung Pham and Quoc Pham were friends. After Trung Pham and Quoc Pham, who are not related, made two unsuccessful attempts to shoot Tran as he was driving home from work, Trung Pham told Lam that he intended to burn Tran's house down.

Quoc Pham admitted that, at approximately 2:40 a.m. on January 7, 1997, he drove Trung Pham and another accomplice to Tri Tran's house to set that house on fire. Trung Pham doused the front porch with gasoline, while the other accomplice threw firebombs through a front window. According to neighbors, within minutes of the firebombing, the entire front portion of the house was totally engulfed in flames.

In 1999, Quoc Pham pled guilty to lesser charges involving this arson, and agreed to cooperate with the government in its prosecution of other participants in this arson. Pursuant to that agreement, the defendant received a sentence of 9 years in prison. When the government later learned, however, that Quoc Pham had not been completely truthful in describing his involvement in this arson, it filed the additional and more serious charges against Pham to which Pham pled guilty today.

Pham is scheduled to be sentenced by United States District Court Judge William B. Shubb on May 12, 2004. He faces the possibility of receiving a sentence of life imprisonment, though the government has agreed to recommend that the defendant initially be sentenced to a term of 30 years in prison.

In 1999, Tanh Huu Lam pled guilty to his role in arranging the January 7, 1997 firebombing. He is currently serving a sentence of life imprisonment without possibility of

release. In 2002, Trung Thanh Pham pled guilty to his role in the firebombing, and is also currently serving a sentence of life in prison without the possibility of release.

The case was investigated by the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, and the Sacramento County Sheriff's Office.

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